

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, BL
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS LETTER

REF: STATE 139605

1. TWO OF THE RESIDENT AMERICANS WHO TOOK PART COMPOSING
SUBJECT LETTER TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THEY HAD SENT
ORIGINAL SIGNED CRITIQUE TO QUOTE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S
HUMAN RIGHTS SUBDIVISION UNQUOTE. SEPTTEL FOLLOWING WITH
EMBASSY COMMENTS. TEXT OF REPORT FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE: DEPARTMENT OF STATE HUMAN RIGHTS SUBDIVISION
WASHINGTON D.C.

DEAR SIRs:

WE WHO HAVE READ THE STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS
IN BOLIVIA OFFICIALLY PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS AND PRESUMABLY
PREPARED BY THE U.S. CONSULATE IN BOLIVIA. AS U.S. CITIZENS
(THE MAJORITY OF US WITH MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE IN BOLIVIA),
WE BELIEVE THAT THE REPORT AS IT STANDS GIVES A FALSE IMPRESSION
OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BOLIVIA. MANY VAGUE
AND MISLEADING POINTS NEED CLARIFYING; OTHER ERRONEOUS STATE-
MENTS NEED CORRECTION; AND FINALLY, A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT
FACTS NEED TO BE ADDED, BECAUSE THEY ARE SIMPLY OMITTED
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FROM THE REPORT. WHAT FOLLOW IS A TOPICAL COMMENTARY ON
THE REPORT, PREPARED IN COMMON BY THE GROUP IN THE HOPE OF
OFFERING TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE CONGRESS A TRUER AND MORE
ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BOLIVIA.

1. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE REPORT
IN GENERAL, WE FEEL THAT THE VALUE OF THE REPORT IS WEAKENED BY

SEVERAL SERIOUS FLAWS: 1.1) AMBIGUITY OF EXPRESSION. AS AN EXAMPLE, WE MIGHT CITE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE ARE STILL NOT PROTECTED FROM OCCASIONAL INFRINGEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE ON THE PART OF MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES." BY THE USE OF THE WORD "MAJORITY" HERE, THE REPORT CONCEDES THAT PRACTICALLY ON ONE, WHATEVER HIS POSITION, IS IMMUNE TO THE THREAT OF ASSASSINATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OR ITS AGENTS. THIS IS VERIFIED BY THE FACT THAT AN EX-MINISTER, COLONEL ANDRES SELICH, AS WELL AS MASSES OF PEASANTS, HAS BEEN LIQUIDATED BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. BUT THE USE OF THE WORD "OCCASIONAL" IN THE SAME STATEMENT SEEMS INTENDED TO WEAKEN THIS REALITY PERHAPS BY IMPLYING THAT BECAUSE THE VIOLATION IS INFREQUENT, IT IS NOT SYSTEMATIC AND THAT THEREFORE THE THREAT OF LOSS OF LIFE IS NOT REALLY A FACTOR IN THE BOLIVIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. WHATEVER THE INTENT OF THE STATEMENT, IT IS EXTREMELY AMBIGUOUS AS IT STANDS. 1.2) THIS VAGUENESS AND AMBIGUITY RESULT OFTEN FROM AN IGNORANCE OF THE CONCRETE REALITY; E.G., THE NAIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT AMNESTIES (CF. BELOW, POINT #2.7). 1.3) OFTEN THE INFORMATION REPORTED IS OUT OF DATE; E.G. THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. 1.4) IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES, THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION CITED ARE NOT DIRECT; E.G., THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS OR LABOR LEADERS HAVE BEEN QUOTED OR INTERVIEWED, WHEREAS OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS ARE ACCEPTED AT FACE VALUE ("NO TORTURE").

2. CLARIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS

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2.1 FREEDOM OF UNIONS AND LABOR ACTIVITY

2.1.1.) ALL UNION ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY PROSCRIBED SINCE THE PROMULGATION OF THE NOVEMBER, 1974, DECREES, EVEN IN THE LEAST POLITICIZED UNIONS WHERE ELECTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT WITH FULL ASSURANCE OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY. 2.1.2) DESPITE THIS PROHIBITION, THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ABLE TO PREVENT THE POWERFUL MINERS' FEDERATION FROM HOLDING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS ON LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS. HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF THE ELIMINATION OF THIS FEDERATION, IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE SINCE MAY OF 1976 TO HOLD ANY UNION ELECTIONS WHATEVER, WHETHER THEY BE LABOR OR PROFESSIONAL UNIONS. 2.1.3) THE BOLIVIAN WORKERS' CENTRAL (C.O.B.), WHICH IS THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION UNITING THE PARTICULAR UNIONS AND FEDERATIONS, HAS BEEN PROSCRIBED BY THE GOVERNMENT SINCE AUGUST OF 1971. 2.1.4) ALL FEDERATIONS HAVE BEEN SHUT DOWN SINCE NOVEMBER, 1974. 2.1.5) ALL THE PRESENT UNION LEADERS (CALLED COORDINATORS), BOTH ON THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL, HAVE BEEN NAMED DIRECTLY BY THE GOVERNMENT. 2.1.6) THOSE LABOR LEADERS WHO WERE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED BY THE WORKERS HAVE BEEN DISAUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT. 2.1.7) ALL THE OFFICIALS OF THE BOLIVIAN WORKERS' CENTRAL AND THE MAJORITY OF THE OFFICIALS OF THE DIFFERENT NATIONAL FEDERATIONS ARE ACTIVELY PERSECUTED AND SOUGHT BY THE GOVERNMENT, OR HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXILED FROM

THE COUNTRY. 2.1.8) THE STRIKES WHICH THE REPORT SIMPLY SAYS
"DO OCCUR", ARE CARRIED OUT AT GREAT PERSONAL RISK TO THE WORK-
ERS, WHO MUST SUFFER SEVERE REPRISALS BY THE GOVERNMENT. AS A
RESULT OF THE MINERS' STRIKE IN QOUYN FIFTY-THREE UNION LEADERS
WERE SENT INTO EXILE TO CHILE, WHERE THEY REMAINED CONFINED IN
SMALL AND INHOSPITALBE VILLAGES IN THE SOUTH, AND WERE SUBJECTED
TO STRICT POLICE VIGILANCE, AS A RESULT OF BOTH THE MINERS'
STRIKE AND THE MANACO SHOE FACTORY STRIKE IN COCHABAMBA, ALSO
IN 1976, A LARGE NUMBER OF WORKERS WERE ARRESTED, OR THREATENTED
WITH EXILE AND WITH BEING FIRED WITH LOSS OF ALL THEIR SOCIAL
BENEFITS, CONFORMITY WITH THE NOVEMBER DECREES. 2.1.9) AT
PRESENT THERE IS NOT ONE LABOR UNION WHICH FUNCTIONS. WORKERS
PREPRESENTATION (SIC) IS EXERCISED EXCLUSIVELY BY THE COORDINATORS,
IN EVERY CASE NAMED DIRECTLY BY THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE LABOR
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2.2 ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE BOLIVIAN WORKERS.

2.2.1.) WORKERS' SALARIES HAVE BEEN FROZEN SINCE NOVEMBER 1972. BUT THE COST OF LIVING HAS CONTINUED TO RISE, AT MODERATE BUT CONSTANT RATES. IN 1976, THE ECONOMY SUFFERED A RATE OF 15 PCT RATE OF INFLATION. THE WORK "BONUSES" GRANTED BY THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO KEEP PACE WITH THIS INCREASE (CF. #3 BELOW).

2.2.2) THE MODEST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH BOLIVIA IS EXPERIENCING FAVORS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BUSINESS SECTORS AND THE MILITARY AND STATE BUREAUCRACY, AND NOT THE WORKERS OR PEASANTS.

2.2.3) DESPITE A 6.3 PCT INCREASE IN THE G.N.P. IN 1976 A RECENT STUDY PUBLISHED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS SHOWN THAT THE REAL SALARIES OF WORKERS ARE 25 PCT LOWER NOW THAN SIX YEARS AGO. (CF. "BOLETIN DE LA CONFERENCIA DE RELIGIOSOS DE BOLIVIA", #23).

2.3 LEGAL SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY

2.3.1) THE LEGISLATURE HAS NOT BEEN OPERATIVE IN BOLIVIA IN THE PAST TEN YEARS. 2.3.2) THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT BANZER FORMALLY RECOGNIZED THE CONSTITUTION OF 1967; NEVERTHELESS, IN FACT THE GOVERNMENT HAS PRACTICALLY ANNULLED THE CONSTITUTION WITH ITS DECREE OF 1972 STATING THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION REMAIN IN EFFECT ONLY IN SO FAR AS THEY ARE "NOT OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT STATUTE, TO THE DISPOSITIONS OF AN INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER AND TO THE DECREE-LAWS WHICH THIS GOVERNMENT ADOPTS IN THE INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY." 2.3.3) BESIDES THE LATTER DECREE, THE LAW OF STATE SECURITY IS STILL IN EFFECT. 2.3.4) IN BOLIVIA, THE JUDICIARY BRANCH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUBORDINATED TO THE EXECUTIVE. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THIS SUBORDINATION OF THE JUDICIAL POWER IS MORE STRICT AND IRONCLAD THAN EVER BEFORE. 2.3.5) SINCE 1973, NO "HABEAS CORPUS" HAS BEEN HEARD BY THE COURTS. 2.3.6) PRIOR TO THAT DATE, ALL THE "HABEAS CORPUS" THAT WERE HEARD BY THE BANZER GOVERNMENT WERE DECLARED NULL. 2.3.7) NOT ONE POLITICAL PRISONER HAS BEEN GRANTED DUE PROCESS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS. 2.3.8) THE LEGAL SYSTEM SUFFERS NOT ONLY FROM THE DEFECT OF "JUSTICE DELAYED" BUT ALSO FROM THE ABERRATION OF THE PRESUMPTION OF GUILT WITHOUT TRIAL. FURTHERMORE, THE BOLIVIAN JAIL SYSTEM INCLUDES MANY PLACES OF CONFINEMENT FOR WHICH THERE IS NO LEGAL PROVISION--ILLEGAL PRISONS WHERE THERE ARE NO VISITS BY OFFICIALS OF THE COURT, NO LEGAL CONTROLS, NO CHECKS AGAINST ABUSES OF DISCIPLINE, AND WHERE PRISON LIFE, PUNISHMENTS, TORTURE, ETC., ARE SUBJECT TO THE ARBITRARY DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR. SUCH IS THE CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE PRISONS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CHONCHOCORO, AND ACHOCALLA OUTSIDE OF LA PAZ, AS WELL AS THE "GRANJAS" PRISONS FOR COMMON CRIMINALS IN CARANAVI AND SANTA CRUZ. 2.3.9) AT PRESENT THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT SENTENCES MANY POLITICAL OPPONENTS

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TUTION REMAIN IN EFFECT ONLY IN SO FAR AS THEY ARE "NOT OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT STATUTE, TO THE DISPOSITIONS OF AN INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER AND TO THE DECREE-LAWS WHICH THIS GOVERNMENT ADOPTS IN THE INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY." 2.3.3) BESIDES THE LATTER DECREE, THE LAW OF STATE SECURITY IS STILL IN EFFECT. 2.3.4) IN BOLIVIA, THE JUDICIARY BRANCH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUBORDINATED TO THE EXECUTIVE. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THIS SUBORDINATION OF THE JUDICIAL POWER IS MORE STRICT AND IRONCLAD THAN EVER BEFORE. 2.3.5) SINCE 1973, NO "HABEAS CORPUS" HAS BEEN HEARD BY THE COURTS. 2.3.6) PRIOR TO THAT DATE, ALL THE "HABEAS CORPUS" THAT WERE HEARD BY THE BANZER GOVERNMENT WERE DECLARED NULL. 2.3.7) NOT ONE POLITICAL PRISONER HAS BEEN GRANTED DUE PROCESS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS. 2.3.8) THE LEGAL SYSTEM SUFFERS NOT ONLY FROM THE DEFECT OF "JUSTICE DELAYED" BUT ALSO FROM THE ABERRATION OF THE PRESUMPTION OF GUILT WITHOUT TRIAL. FURTHERMORE, THE BOLIVIAN JAIL SYSTEM INCLUDES MANY PLACES OF CONFINEMENT FOR WHICH THERE IS NO LEGAL PROVISION--ILLEGAL PRISONS WHERE THERE ARE NO VISITS BY OFFICIALS OF THE COURT, NO LEGAL CONTROLS, NO CHECKS AGAINST ABUSES OF DISCIPLINE, AND WHERE PRISON LIFE, PUNISHMENTS, TORTURE, ETC., ARE SUBJECT TO THE ARBITRARY DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR. SUCH IS THE CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE PRISONS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CHONCHOCORO, AND ACHOCALLA OUTSIDE OF LA PAZ, AS WELL AS THE "GRANJAS" PRISONS FOR COMMON CRIMINALS IN CARANAVI AND SANTA CRUZ. 2.3.9) AT PRESENT THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT SENTENCES MANY POLITICAL OPPONENTS

TO CONFINEMENT, NOT ONLY CARCELARY BUT TERRITORIAL AS WELL. MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS, ONCE THEY ARE RELEASED FROM JAIL, STILL ARE OBLIGATED TO PRESENT THEMSELVES TO THE SECURITY FORCES DAILY OR WEEKLY. THE LEAST SUSPICION IS CAUSE FOR THEIR BEING ARRESTED AGAIN. 2.3.11) IN BOLIVIA, TERRORISM BY LEFTIST GROUPS DOES NOT EXIST AS A POLITICAL TACTIC. WITH BUT FEW EXCEPTIONS, PERSONS ARE IMPRISONED OR PERSECUTED EXCLUSIVELY UNCLASSIFIED

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BECAUSE OF THEIR OPINIONS OR BECAUSE ON NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL AND LABOR ACTIVITIES.

2.4 SITUATION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

2.4.1) THERE ARE MANY PRISONERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN JAIL FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR WITH NO POSSIBILITY OF INITIATING A LEGAL PROCESS; E.G. NILA HEREDIA, ANTONIO PEREDO, JORGE SOLOGUREN AND MARCOS FARFAN. 2.4.2) THE VAST MAJORITY OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, AFTER SPENDING A LENGTHY PERIOD OF TIME IN JAIL WITH NO TRIAL, ARE EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY. THOSE WHO AVOID EXILE AND SUCCEED IN STAYING IN THE COUNTRY, ARE SUBJECTED TO PERMANENT VIGILANCE BY THE SECURITY FORCES. 2.4.3) ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO ACCURATE FIGURES ON THE SUBJECT, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT SINCE THE BANZER GOVERNMENT TOOK POWER, MORE THAN SIX THOUSAND BOLIVIANS HAVE BEEN EXILED AND CANNOT RETURN TO BOLIVIA. THEY REPRESENT ALL THE DIVERSE SOCIAL CLASSES AND WALKS OF LIFE: MINERS, PROFESSIONALS, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, FACTORY WORKERS, PROFESSORS, AND TEACHERS, INDIAN PEASANTS, POLITICAL LEADERS, PRIESTS AND NUNS, ETC. 2.4.4) THE RAIDING OF PRIVATE HOMES WITHOUT JUDICIAL PERMISSION OR WARRANT IS VERY COMMON. IN THESE RAIDS, THE AGENTS USUALLY COFISCATE ALL PERSONAL DOCUMENTS AND NOT INFREQUENTLY STEAL WHATEVER THEY FIND OF VALUE IN THE HOME, EVEN FROM THE POOREST OF FAMILIES. 2.4.5) THERE ARE AT PRESENT SOME 120 TO 150 POLITICAL PRISONERS.

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2.5 TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

2.5.1) IT IS COMMON PRACTICE TO HOLD PRISONERS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT DURING THE FIRST FEW WEEKS OF THEIR DETENTION.

2.5.2) POLITICAL PRISONERS OF MORE IMPORTANCE ARE HELD TOTALLY INCOMMUNICADO FOR MONTHS. AT PRESENT THERE ARE TWENTY SUCH PRISONERS. WE CAN SITE THE NAMES OF ANTONIO PEREDO, JOSE PIMENTEL, RUBEN EGUINO, ZENON BARRIENTOS MAMANI, ALEJANDRO ROJAS, IVAN PAZ, ARTEMIO CAMARGO, DAVID ZAPATA, RICARDO FERNANDEZ, REMBERTO CARDENAS, TEODORO SARMIENTO...2.5.3)

THERE ARE ALSO NINE WOMEN PRISONERS BEING HELD IN JAIL OF VIACHA IN LITERALLY SUB-HUMAN CONDITIONS. SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN IN PRISON FOR MORE THAN A YEAR WITHOUT LEGAL PROCESS.

2.5.4) WITH REGARD TO TORTURE, WE CAN AFFIRM THAT IT CONTINUES, ONLY NOW IN A MUCH MORE SUBTLE AND SYSTEMATIC FASHION. WE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING PROOFS: 2.5.4.1) BISHOP ALEJANDRO MESTRE, CATHOLIC AUXILIARY BISHOP OF SUCRE AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, WHO FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS WAS THE BISHOP'S OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE IN VISITING THE PRISONERS PUBLICALLY AFFIRMED THE FOLLOWING: "UNFORTUNATELY I MUST ADMIT THAT EVEN AT THAT TIME (1974 AND 1975), AND AFTERWARDS AS WELL, THERE WERE DEPLORABLE CASES OF PRISONERS BEING TREATED IN-HUMANLY. THESE CAN BE FOUND IN THE RECORDS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, UNDOUBETLY, TOGETHER WITH VARIOUS LETTERS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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MY OWN ADDRESSED TO THE MINISTER, PROTESTING STRONGLY AGAINST THE EXCESSES COMMITTED BY SOME OF THE AGENTS...RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN CASES OF INHUMAN TREATMENT USING ROPES, WHIPS, AND BEATINGS WITH TRUNCHEONS, ADMINISTERED EVEN TO GIRLS. I DON'T SAY THIS FROM MERE HEARSAY, AT TIMES SEEING THEIR BRUISES AND WOUNDS

SOME PRISONERS WERE HELD MANACLED IN THEIR CELLS FOR SOME TIME... I HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED VERBALLY TO THE MINISTER MY DISAGREEMENT WITH THE METHOD FOLLOWED IN ARRESTS, SOMETIMES MADE ON THE BASIS OF MERE ACCUSATIONS (PERHAPS OUT OF BAD WILL OR FOR PERSONAL ENDS), WHILE DUE TRIAL IS DELAYED OR OMITTED ALTOGETHER." ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER WHICH QUOTED THIS STATEMENT, "BISHOP MESTRE EXPRESSED THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S CONCERN, MADE KNOWN TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, ABOUT POLITICAL ARRESTS MADE ON THE BASIS OF INTRIGUES OR

DENUNCIATIONS AGAINST INNOCENT PERSONS." ("PRESENCIA" MARCH 17, 1977). 2.5.4.2) REPORT OF FATHER ROBERT LEIBRECHT, OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE FROM MARCH, 1976, TO DECEMBER OF THE SAME YEAR: "SOME PRISONERS HAVE SIGNS OF HAVING BEEN BEATEN OR TORTURED; WE SAW THEIR LEGS WITH WOUNDS, THEIR HANDS WITH NO CIRCULATION, THEIR BODIES COVERED WITH BRUISES...(VISIT TO THE PANOPTICO JAIL, LA PAZ, JUNE 16, 1976). "WE SAW THE SIGNS (OF BEATINGS) ON THE BODIES OF FIVE PRISONERS WHO HAD BEEN TORTURED." (VIST TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ORDER, LA PAZ, JUNE 17, 1976). "THERE IS A GROUP (OF PRISONERS) WHICH HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY VISITS FOR SIX MONTHS. THE PRISONERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN JAIL THE LONGEST TIME HAVE HAD NOT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES FOR QUITE SOME TIME. THE FAMILIES OF SOME OF THESE PRISONERS DID NOT KNOW WHERE THEY WERE BECAUSE THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR DID NOT GIVE THEM ANY INFORMATION DESPITE THEIR PLEAS." (VISIT TO DOP, LA PAZ, JUNE 17, 1976). "ONE GROUP OF TEN PRISONERS HAS ONLY ONE BLANKET AMONG THEM. THERE ARE SEVERAL WHO WERE BEATEN WHEN TAKEN PRISONER. ONE HAS A UNCLASSIFIED

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FRACTURED HAND; ANOTHER HAS BROKEN RIBS; AND STILL ANOTHER URGENTLY NEEDS A CHEST X-RAY SINCE HE IS IN BAD CONDITION DUE TO THE BEATINGS. THEY GO TO THE BATHROOM IN THE OPEN FIELDS. NO SHOWERS, NO LIGHT, NO RUNNING WATER. THEY HAVE RECEIVED NO VISIT FOR TWO MONTHS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE PRISONER. THEIR FAMILIES DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY ARE." (VISIT TO THE PRISON OF CHONCHOCORO, JUNE 17, 1976.) "THERE IS A LACK OF BLANKETS AND MATTRESSES. THE FIVE WOMEN CAN GO TO THE BATHROOM ONLY TWICE A DAY; AT 9:00 AM AND AT 8:00 PM. THE WOMEN HAVE CANS IN THEIR CELLS... THERE ARE FOUR WOMEN WHO WERE BADLY TORTURED IN COCHABAMBA AND ORURO WHEN THEY WERE TAKEN PRISONERS. ONE OF THEM WAS SUBMITTED TO THREE INTERROGATIONS AT DAWN, WHIPPED AND KICKED IN THE STOMACH. ANOTHER WAS TAKEN PRISONER WITH HER NINE-OLD MONTH DAUGHTER, WHOM THEY USED TO TORTURE HER. UNTIL OUR VISIT THEY HAD NO LIGHT, AND THEY WERE GIVEN A LIGHT BULB THE NIGHT BEFORE OUR VISIT. THEIR RELATIVES DON'T KNOW THEY ARE THERE. OURS IS THE FIRST VISIT THEY'VE HAD IN SIX MONTHS."

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(VISIT TO THE PRISON OF VIACHA JUNE 18, 1976), 2.5.4.3) ON THE SIXTH DAY OF MAY 1977, THE PRIESTS OF SIX PARISHES IN THE CITY OF COCHABAMBA MADE A DECLARATION PUBLICALLY DENOUNCING THE TORTURE OF THE STUDENT FAUSTINO TORRICO IN THE POLICE CELLS OF THE CITY PRISON. (PRESENCIA/MAY 6, 1977). 2.5.4.4) THERE ARE MANY PRISONERS WHO REMAIN TOTALLY INCOMMUNICADO (EVEN FOR THE OFFICIAL CHURCH AND RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES), PRECISELY BECAUSE VISIBLE ON THEIR BODIES ARE THE WOUNDS FROM THE TORTURE THEY HAVE RECEIVED. 2.5.4.5) SOME OF THE INVESTIGATION GROUP HAVE HEARD TAPES OF TRUSTWORTHY PRISONERS IN WHICH DETAILED INFORMATION IS GIVEN AS TO MODERN METHODS OF TORTURE, AND IN WHICH THEY IDENTIFY THEIR TORTURERS WITH THEIR REAL AND CODE NAMES. AMONG THE TORTURERS STILL USED BY THE GOVERNMENT ARE THE NOTORIOUS (BLANK IN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT).

2.5.4.6) ALSO, SOME OF US HAVE PERSONALLY HELPED TO PAY THE MEDICAL EXPENSES OF PRISONERS WHICH WERE BADLY TORTURED AND THEN FREED WHEN THEIR INNOCENCE WAS PROVED.

2.6 SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS
THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT BANZER HAS VIOLATED AND CONTINUES TO VIOLATE IN A GRAVE AND SYSTEMATIC WAY ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL NORMS WITH RESPECT TO BOLIVIAN CITIZENS WHO ARE FORCED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. THOUSANDS OF CITIZENS HAVE BEEN EXPELLED
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FROM BOLIVIA WITHOUT ANY HOPE OF RETURNING. BUT, BECAUSE MOST COUNTRIES WOULD OBJECT TO RECEIVING SUCH PERSONS AS RESIDENTS INSTEAD OF TOURISTS, THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT HAS RECOURSE TO A STRATAGEM CALCULATED TO FOOL THE IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. THE PASSPORT OF THE EXPELLED PERSON CONTAINS NOTHING TO INDICATE HIS CONDITION OF POLITICAL DEPORTEE. HE LEAVES BOLIVIA AND ENTERS ANOTHER COUNTRY OFFICIALLY AS A TOURIST; NEVERTHELESS, HE CANNOT RETURN TO BOLIVIA, BECAUSE THE SEAL AND SIGNATURE IN HIS PASSPORT ARE IN RED INK. THIS MEANS THAT THE SECURITY FORCES OF BOLIVIA WILL NO LONGER PERMIT HIM TO RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY. BECAUSE

OF THIS FICTITIOUS TOURIST STATUS, THE PERSON EXILED MUST TRAVEL WITH RETURN TRIP TICKETS, WHICH OF COURSE HE WILL NEVER USE.

2.7 CHRISTMAS AMNESTY

IT IS A TRADITION IN BOLIVIA FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DICTATE AN AMNESTY ON CHRISTMAS EVE. THE BANZER GOVERNMENT COULD HARDLY DEViate FROM THIS CUSTOM. HOWEVER, NOT INFREQUENTLY, THE AMNESTY HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A FARCE, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: 2.7.1) INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF THOSE FAVORED WITH AMENESTY ARE SOME PRISONERS WHO HAVE BEEN FREED WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS PREVIOUSLY. 2.7.2) SOME DAYS BEFORE THE AMNESTY, INNOCENT PEASANTS AND WORKERS ARE ARRESTED, SO THAT THEIR RELASE ON CHRISTMAS EVE CAN SWELL THE LIST OF THOSE FREED. 2.7.3) IN 1974, THE COMMISSION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE PRESENTED A PREORT TO THE BOLIVIAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE PROVING THAT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THOSE RELEASED BY AMNESTY WERE TOTALLY INNOCENT AND DID NOT EVEN HAVE ANY POLITICAL BACKGROUND. 2.7.4) ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT PRESENTS THE CHRISTMAS AMNESTY AS BENEFITTING ONLY POLITICAL PRISONERS, IT USUALLY INCLUDES COMMON CRIMINALS CONVICTED OF VARIOUS CRIMES, AGAIN TO SWELL THE LIST.

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2.8 REAL FACULTIES OF THE BISHOPS' REPRESENTATIVE WHO VISITS THE PRISONERS.

ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE PRIEST WHO PRESENTLY IS THE BISHOPS' REPRESENTATIVE TO VISIT THE JAILS, HIS MISSION IS SERIOUSLY LIMITED BY THE FOLLOWING FACTORS: 2.8.1) HE CANNOT VISIT AT ALL TIMES ALL THE PLACES OF DETENTION (AND NEVER CAN HE VISIT THE CELLS IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ITSELF.) 2.8.2) HE CAN NEVER SPEAK TO MORE IMPORTANT POLITICAL PRISONERS WITHOUT AGENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE BEING PRESENT, 2.8.3) THERE ARE SOME PRISONERS WHOM NOT EVEN A PRIEST HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO VISIT FOR CLOSE TO A YEAR; E.G. ZENON BARRIENTOS MAMANI, EDMIR ESPINOZA, LUIS STAMPONI...2.8.4) KNOWING THAT THE PRIEST WHO ACTUALLY VISITS THE PRISONERS WOULD NEVER COVER UP THE TRUTH AND THAT HE COULD FORMULATE SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE SECURITY FORCES, THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR HAS ITSELF APPOINTED A PRIEST TO VISIT THE JAILS WHO ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT. IN THIS WAY THERE IS NO DANGER THAT THIS OFFICIAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE WILL MAKE A PUBLIC DECLARATION WHICH IS CONRARY TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INTERESTS.

2.9 THE REPORTS OF THE RED CROSS AND OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

2.9.1) THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS DOES NOT ENJOY ENOUGH INDEPENDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW IT TO VISIT ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS AND TO PRESS FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE INHUMAN CONDITIONS IN WHICH MOST OF THEM LIVE. THE BOLIVIAN

RED CROSS, UNFORTUNATELY, IS EXCESSIVELY SUBORDINATED TO THE GOVERNMENT. 2.9.3) WITH REFERENCE TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, IT IS MOST DESIREABLE THAT AN OFFICIAL COMMISSION FROM AMNESTY VISIT BOLIVIA TO ANALYZE THE PRESENT SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE LAST OFFICIAL VISIT OF AMNESTY TO BOLIVIA WAS IN 1974.

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ACTION DHA-02

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2.10 FREDDOM OF THE PRESS

WITH REGARD TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, IT IS SUFFICIENT TO CITE A FEW SALIENT FACTS IN ORDER TO PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE THE PRESENT SITUATION OF OPRESSION. 2.10.1) THERE ARE FIFTY EIGHT BOLIVIAN JOURNALISTS WHO ARE PRESENTLY LIVING IN EXILE. (WE HAVE THE COMPLETE LIST). 2.10.2) TWO JOURNALISTS ARE PRESENTLY PRISONERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ORDER (DOP) IN LA PAZ, INCOMMUNICADO FOR OVER TWO MONTHS: IVAN PAZ AND DAVID ZAPATA. 2.10.3) THERE ARE SEVERAL RADIO STATIONS UNDER GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION; E.G., THE RADIOS IN THE MINING AREAS. 2.10.4) THE CHURCH RADIO, RADIO FIDES WAS FINED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND RADIO PIO XII WAS DESTROYED BY AGENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ITELLIGENCE SERVICE IN 1975. RADIO PROGRESO WAS RECENTLY SUSPENDED FOR A WEEK FOR OPPOSING A GOVERNMENT PROPOSED EXCHANGE OF TERRITORY WITH CHILE TO ALLOW BOLIVIA AN EXIT TO THE SEA. 2.10.5) SINCE JUNE OF 1976 NO BOLIVIAN OR FOREIGN JOURNALIST HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO ENTER THE MINING CENTERS TO REPORT ON THE SITUATION THERE. THIS PROHIBITION HAS BEEN STRICTLY ENFORCED. 2.10.6) BY OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE HIGH COMMAND OF THE ARMED FORCES, OCTOBER 1976, THE PUBLICATION OF ALL ARTICLES AND COMMENTARIES CRITICAL OF "STATE DIGNITARIES" AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES IS FORBIDDEN.
LA PAZ BOLIVIA, 14 DE MAYO, 1977

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NOTE: A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF AMERICAN CITIZENS HAS
SIGNED THIS REPORT WHICH WAS PRESENTED TO MR. TERENCE TODMAN
ON MAY 14, 1977.
UNQUOTE.
STEDMAN

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Message Attributes

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